

to extend him, be it but to fortifie her iudgement, which else an easie battery might lay flat, for taking a Begger without lesse quality. But how comes it, he is to sojourne with you? How creepes acquaintance?

Phil. His Father and I were Souldiers together, to whom I have bin often bound for no lesse then my life.

Enter Posthumus.

Heere comes the Britaine. Let him be so entertained amongst you, as suites with Gentlemen of your knowing, to a Stranger of his quality. I beseech you all be better knowne to this Gentleman, whom I commend to you, as a Noble Friend of mine. How Worthy he is, I will leave to appeare hereafter, rather then story him in his owne hearing.

French. Sir, we have knowne together in Orleance.

Post. Since when, I have bin debitor to you for courtesies, which I will be euer to pay, and yet pay still.

French. Sir, you o're-rate my poore kindnesse, I was glad I did atone my Countryman and your it had bene pity you should have bene put together, with so mortall a purpose, as then each bore, vpon importance of so slight and triviall a nature.

Post. By your pardon Sir, I was then a young Traveller, rather than'd to goe euen with what I heard, then in my euery action to be guided by others experiences: but vpon my mended iudgement (if I offend to say it is mended) my Quarrell was not altogether slight.

French. Faith yes, to be put to the arbitrement of Swords, and by such two, that would by all likelihood haue confounded one the other, or haue false both.

Iach. Can we with manners, aske what was the difference?

French. Safely, I thinke, 'twas a contention in publicke, which may (without contradiction) suffer the report. It was much like an argument that fell out last night, where each of vs fell in praise of our Country. Mistresses. This Gentleman, at that time vouching, (and vpon warrant of bloody affirmation) his to be more Faire, Vertuous, Wise, Chaste, Constant, Qualified, and lesse attemptible then any, the rarest of our Ladies in France.

Iach. That Lady is not now living; or this Gentlemans opinion by this, worne out.

Post. She holds her Vertue still, and I my mind.

Iach. You must not so farre preferre her, 'fore ours of Italy.

Post. Being so farre prouok'd as I was in France: I would abate her nothing, though I professe my selfe her Adorer, not her Friend.

Iach. As faire, and as good: a kind of hand in hand comparison, had bene something too faire, and too good for any Lady in Britanie; if she went before others. I haue seene as that Diamond of yours out-lusters many I haue beheld, I could not beleue she excelled many: but I haue not seene the most pretious Diamond that is, nor you the Lady.

Post. I prais'd her, as I rated her: so do I my Stone.

Iach. What do you esteeme it at?

Post. More then the world enioyes.

Iach. Either your vapourgon'd Mistis is dead, or she's out-priz'd by a trifle.

Post. You are mistaken: the one may be solde or giuen, or if there were wealth enough for the purchases, or merite for the gift. The other is not a thing for sale, and onely the gift of the Gods.

Iach. Which the Gods haue giuen you?

Post. Which by their Graces I will keepe.

Iach. You may weare her in title yours: but you know strange Fowle light vpon neighbouring Ponds. Your Ring may be stolne too, so your brace of vnprizeable Estimations, the one is but fraile, and the other Casuall; A cunning Thiefe, or a (that way) accomplish'd Courtier, would hazzard the winning both of first and last.

Post. Your Italy, contains none so accomplish'd a Courtier to conuince the Honour of my Mistis: if in the holding or losse of that, you terme her fraile, I do nothing doubt you haue store of Theeues, notwithstanding I feare not my Ring.

Phil. Let vs leaue heere, Gentlemen?

Post. Sir, with all my heart. This worthy Signior I thanke him, makes no stranger of me, we are familiar at first.

Iach. With five times so much conuersation, I should get ground of your faire Mistis; make her go backe, euen to the yeilding, had I admittance, and opportunitie to friend.

Post. No, no.

Iach. I dare thereupon pawne the moytie of my Estate, to your Ring, which in my opinion o're-values it something: but I make my wager rather against your Confidence, then her Reputation. And to barre your offence herein to, I durst attempt it against any Lady in the world.

Post. You are a great deale abus'd in too bold a persuasion, and I doubt not you sustaine what y'are worthy of, by your Attempt.

Iach. What's that?

Post. A Repulse though your Attempt (as you call it) deserue more; a punishment too.

Phil. Gentlemen enough of this, it came in too suddenly, let it dye as it was borne, and I pray you be better acquainted.

Iach. Would I had put my Estate, and my Neighbors on th'approbation of what I haue spoke,

Post. What Lady would you chuse to assaile?

Iach. Yours, whom in constancie you thinke stands so safe. I will lay you ten thousands Duckets to your Ring, that commend me to the Court where your Lady is, with no more aduantage then the opportunitie of a second conference, and I will bring from thence, that Honor of hers, which you imagine so refer'd.

Posthumus. I will wage against your Gold, Gold to it: My Ring I holde deere as my finger, 'tis part of it.

Iach. You are a Friend, and there in the wiser: if you buy Ladies flesh at a Million a Dram, you cannot pre-seure it from taintings; but I see you haue some Religion in you, that you feare.

Post. This is but a custome in your tongue: you beare a grauer purpose I hope.

Iach. I am the Master of my speeches, and would vnder-go what's spoken, I sweare.

Post. Will you? I shall but lend my Diamond till your returne: let there be Couenants drawne between's. My Mistis exceeds in goodnesse, the hugeness of your vnworthy thinking, I dare you to this match: heere's my Ring.

Phil. I will haue it no lay.

Iach. By the Gods it is one: if I bring you no sufficient testimony that I haue enioy'd the deereft bodily part of your Mistis: my ten thousand Duckets are yours, so

so is your Diamond too: if I come off, and leaue her in such honour as you haue trust in: Shee your Iewell, this your Iewell, and my Gold are yours: provided, I haue your commendation, for my more free entertainment.

Post. I embrace these Conditions: let vs haue Articles betwixt vs: onely thus farre you shall answer: if you make your voyage vpon her, and giue me directly to vnderstand, you haue preuayl'd, I am no further your Enemy, shee is not worth our debate: If shee remaine vnconquered, you not making it appeare otherwise: for your ill opinion, and th'assault you haue made to her chastity, you shall answer me with your Sword.

Iach. Your hand, a Couenant: we will haue these things set downe by lawfull Counsell, and straight away for Britaine, least the Bargaine should catch cold: and herue: I will fetch my Gold, and haue our two Wagers recorded.

Post. Agreed.

French. Will this hold, thinke you?

Phil. Signior Iachimo will not from it.

Pray let vs follow 'em.

Scena Sexta.

Enter Queene, Ladies, and Cornelius.

Qu. Whiles yet the dewe's on ground, Gather those Flowers,

Make haste. Who ha's the note of them?

Lady. I Madam.

Qu. Dispatch.

Exit Ladies.

Now Master Doctor, haue you brought those drugges?

Cor. Pleaseth your Highnes, I: here they are, Madam:

But I beseech your Grace, without offence

(My Conscience bids me aske) wherefore you haue

Commanded of me these most poisonous Compounds,

Which are the mouers of a languishing death:

But though slow, deadly.

Qu. I wonder, Doctor,

Thou ask'st me such a Question: Haue I not bene

Thy Pupill long? Hast thou not learn'd me how

To make Perfumes? Distill? Preserve? Yea so,

That our great King himselfe doth woo me oft

For my Confections? Haueing thus farre proceeded,

(Vnlesse thou thinkest me diuellish) is't not meete

That I did amplifie my iudgement in

Other Conclusions? I will try the forces

Of these thy Compounds, on such Creatures as

We count not worth the hanging (but none humane)

To try the vigour of them, and apply

Allayments to their Aet, and by them gather

Their severall vertues, and effects.

Cor. Your Highnesse

Shall from this practise, but make hard your heart:

Besides, the feeling these effects will be

Both noysome, and infectious.

Qu. O content thee.

Enter Pisanio.

Heere comes a flattering Rascal, vpon him

Will I first worke: Hee's for his Master,

And enemy to my Sonne. How now Pisanio?

Doctor, your seruice for this time is ended,

Take your owne way.